(b) the reasons for non-completion of these projects for such a long time;

(c) any time-frame within which the projects are going to be completed; and

(d) whether there is any possibility of withdrawal of some of these projects?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) to (d) The Pagladiya Dam Project located at Thalkuchi village in the Nalbari district of Assam is the only Central Sector multipurpose project having flood control, irrigation and hydro power generation benefits associated with it. The project is being implemented by the Brahmaputra Board. Rs. 28.32 crore has been released to the Brahmaputra Board against this project. The project is scheduled to be completed by December 2007. However, its completion within the stipulated time depends upon the completion of Zirat survey which is to be completed by the State Government of Assam. However, several apprehensions have been made by local people and organisations within Bodo Territorial Council, Assam Government is negotiating the matter.

Production of alternative fuels

*12. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the trees like pungan, neem, karanji, ratanjyot or jatropha can be grown to produce oil and this oil can be converted into bio-diesel after esterification and used as fuel in diesel engines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken for using and producing alternative renewable energy to the petroleum products in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Bio-diesel, derived from the vegetable oils mentioned in the question can be used as an automotive fuel after mixing with diesel. The process technology for the production of bio-diesel from vegetable oils is available in the country. Under instructions from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to the Oil Marketing

Companies in the public sector, field trials using bio-diesel and diesel blend in buses are in progress in collaboration with Haryana Roadways and the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST), Mumbai. Field trails and engine tests on locomotives are also in progress. However, there is no ready domestic market for bio-diesel in India since bio-diesel based on readily available feed-stocks cost much more than diesel. Tackling the cost angle is an essential on-going component of promoting the bio-diesel programme. It is being addressed in consultation with the Ministry of Finance.

(c) The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is implementing an ethanol blended petrol programme in notified sugar producing States/ adjoining States and Union Territories, which envisages supply of 5% ethanol blended petrol if ethanol is available on a sustained basis at reasonable prices for such blending.

A Coal Bed Methane (CBM) policy has been framed to harness the methane hidden in coal beds. So far, 16 CBM blocks have been awarded to different companies. For exploration of gas hydrates, a Steering Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas which has prepared a roadmap for such exploration. Five sub-groups on Geo-Science, drilling, production, trasnportation/pipeline and environment have also been formed to carry out simultaneous activities related to gas hydrates.

Extension of Raipur airport

†*13. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently made any announcement regarding extension of some airports in the country;

(b) if so, whether the extension of Raipur airport in Chhattisgarh has been included in this announcement;

(c) the land required for extension of Raipur airport and the amount required for acquiring the said land;

(d) whether Airports Authority of India has paid the required amount for acquiring the land to the State Government;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.